

STATEMENT

by

**S. ASLOV, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Tajikistan to the United Nations,
at the General Assembly Thematic Debate “Addressing Climate Change : the United
Nations and the World at Work”**

New York, 13 February 2008

Mr. President,

First of all I would like to extend our appreciation for the organization of today's thematic debate on Addressing Climate Change.

I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to extend, on behalf of my delegation, appreciation to the Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon for his tireless efforts at the advancement of the issue of climate change, due to which the subject has risen to the very top of the UN agenda. Last year these particular efforts led us, member states and international organizations, to the UN Bali Conference on Climate Change that delivered the *Bali Action Plan* and defined a strategic framework for near-term cooperative efforts in the areas of adaptation, mitigation, technology and financing.

I would like to refer only to adaptation. As it was stated during the High-level Event on Climate Change in September 2007, **“adaptation becomes inevitable, given the ongoing climate changes”**. A vivid proof of this statement is the current unfavorable weather conditions faced by my country. In January and February in the Tajikistan's valleys the temperature dropped as low as minus 18-23 degrees by Celsius, which is by 8 to 13 degrees lower than the usual norm. Severe cold followed by heavy snowstorms. Over the last fifty years the weather records have never registered such an extremely cold winter. As a consequence, the rivers were frozen, numerous pumps and water supply networks were damaged. That actually caused the energy crisis, as a result of which the work of a great number of industrial enterprises was suspended. Almost all winter crop was affected, severe damage was done to fruit trees, vineyards, etc. The estimated economic damage accounts for several hundred million US dollars.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the UN, UNDP, WB, World Food Program and other special agencies, as well as to a number of member states, for the assistance and support rendered to my country.

Mr. President,

We support the thesis that climate change and development are inseparable items of a common agenda - sustainable development, which is based on the three components, namely, economic development, social development and environmental protection.

At the same time we believe that there is another very important component, which deserves to be specifically addressed in this connection, and without which life on Earth can not be sustained, that is water. It is common knowledge, that shaping of climate and emerging of life are closely connected with this natural resource, which just like climate itself needs to be treated with care. Meanwhile, some parts of our planet are already experiencing chronic shortage of freshwater. Against the background of ever increasing influence of climate change, especially in the dry regions of our planet, the issue of supply of the population with freshwater and development of numerous water-dependent economic sectors is becoming increasingly urgent.

A unique natural resource, water is used by humanity for drinking, food production, manufacturing of goods, and generating alternative electrical energy, on which, under the circumstances, depends success of our efforts in achieving the MDGs, providing access to electrical energy and, eventually, attaining sustainable development.

For this reason, we think it expedient to pay special attention to the issues of water and water supply, and to hold a High-Level Event or to convene a special session of GA on water supply issues, with the aim of discussing current progress and adopting specific measures for the achievement of MDGs, and for the implementation of the International Decade of Action "*Water for Life*", 2005-2015 and the International Sanitary Year.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, I would like to briefly speak of another aspect of climate change. That is natural disasters, which in recent years have been occurring more often and on a larger scale. Water related disasters account for the most part of global natural disasters. Floods, mud flows, land slides, droughts and other water related disasters considerably affect the countries' wellbeing. According to the Inter-Governmental Council on Climate Change, the current trends are likely to produce an even worse scenario because, as a result of climate change, the scale and frequency of floods and droughts can increase in the 21 century. The losses caused by natural disasters are more severe in developing countries than in industrial nations.

We call on to enhance cooperation among member states and international organizations in this area. To this end, the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan made a decision to make a practical contribution to this cause by holding the *International Conference on Water Related Nature Disasters Reduction* in Dushanbe, on June 27-28, 2008.

Our hope is that the UN and its special agencies, as well as members states, will be actively participating in the forthcoming Conference in Dushanbe.

Thank you for attention.